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UNCLAS GUATEMALA 000457

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR PM/DTCC - BLUE LANTERN COORDINATOR KYLE M. BALLARD

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ETTC](#) [KMOC](#) [GT](#)
SUBJECT: GUATEMALA: BLUE LANTERN PRE-LICENSE END USE CHECK,
050154491

REF: STATE 35040

¶1. (SBU) Summary: In response to reftel, Emboffs researched the bona fides of the arms import company Armeria el Guerrero (AG). The research included an on-site inspection of AG, an interview with the company's owner, and records checks of both the company and the owner with the Guatemala's Arms and Munitions Control Department (DECAM). As a result of the investigation, Post recommends approval of reftel license. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) On May 6, Emboffs conducted an on-site inspection of AG located at 15 Avenida 3-86 Zona 1, Edificio Santa Rita Local D, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala and interviewed the company's owner, Aldo Eduardo Maselli Gonzalez. Maselli's responses were detailed and professional. He immediately presented Emboffs with a complete portfolio of all required company, commercial licensing and DECAM certifications. Although a newcomer to the field of weapons selling after only seven months in business, Maselli's retail store, weapons storage room, arms and ammunition inventory, and DECAM books reflected exemplary business practices. AG is located on the bottom floor of a commercial retail center, which is owned by Maselli's family, and includes a secure storefront with visible signage, steel rolling doors that protect a glass storefront, two sets of security bar doors inside the front entrance, and a security guard protecting the inside of the store. The retail area has one long weapons counter. In the back of the store is a small office with one desk and a weapons storage room. The weapons storage room itself is very secure with all of the necessary protective measures needed including vibrating motion detectors in the walls and ceiling that are connected to a 24-hour alarm company. The weapons storage room measures 2 1/2 meters on each side and is made of four solid cinder block walls with one reinforced steel-grated wall. Behind the weapons storage room is a private home not owned by the Maselli family.

¶3. (SBU) According to Maselli, he has been in the arms industry for only 7 months. He and his wife, Sara Magdalena Sanchez Gonzalez, are the sole owners of this company, and he is a lawyer by profession practicing in Guatemala City. Maselli began this business through a mentorship with one of his clients, another satisfactory Blue Lantern licensing recipient, Jose Eduardo Bolanos. Bolanos has guided Maselli in all aspects on how to operate the business and purchase weapons. As noted in reftel, Maselli is interested in selling 50 COBRA Patriot DAO Pistols, .380ACP because he explained to Emboffs that this weapon is small with no recoil and easy to carry. Maselli added that this particular weapon had not previously been sold in Guatemala. (Note: Emboffs cannot confirm the accuracy of Maselli's claim. End Note.) Maselli plans to expand his business with a second location in Guatemala City and provide his customers with weapons that are not common in other stores. To date, Maselli explained that most of his sales are local and have been to individuals

who have complied with the detailed DECAM purchasing process.

The 50 COBRA Patriot pistols will be his first U.S. weapons purchase. Most of his inventory, which is under 50 weapons in all, have been purchased from Argentina, Mexico, and 80% of his inventory was purchased from Bolanos who specializes in weapons manufactured by Smith and Wesson. Maselli confirmed with Emboffs that he knows the regulations governing the imports of U.S.-origin defense articles, including restrictions on re-transfer and re-export.

¶4. (SBU) AG books and DECAM registries were well maintained, Q4. (SBU) AG books and DECAM registries were well maintained, and indicated that while AG does sell some of the weapons to other arms dealers, the company has sold a small amount of the weapons to private citizens.

¶5. (SBU) AG has a satisfactory record with DECAM and has passed all routine inspections without incident. According to DECAM's Director, Colonel Hector Del Cid, AG is a small-scale but well managed weapons store that is operating within local laws and regulations. Based on the results of the on-site inspection, interviews and a records check with DECAM, Post recommends approval of the reftel license.

McFarland